

CONNECTICUT MARINE TRADES ASSOCIATION

20 Plains Road
Essex, CT 06475-1501

(860) 767-2645 • Fax (860) 767-3559 • e-mail cmta@snet.net

January 30, 2013

Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: H.B. No. 51~~98~~ An Act Concerning No-Wake Zones.

Chairmen Meyer & Gentile, Senator Chapin and Distinguished Members;

The Connecticut Marine Trades Association (CMTA) and our 340 strong member businesses urge you to not support H.B. No. 51~~98~~ An Act Concerning No-Wake Zones. This appears to be a simple bill but it's also a very confusing one. The intent of this bill is not appropriately worded in the Statement of Purpose where it's referencing land erosion. In reality, if enacted, 51~~98~~ would give enforcement powers to harbormasters to cite vessel operators for excessive speed in a minimum wake area.

Municipal harbormasters are appointed by the Governor from a pool of three names put forward by individual Harbor Management Commissions where a commission has been established. The position of Harbormaster is a pure political patronage position and requires no training, certification or even specific knowledge of its candidates. While there are a very few harbormasters that have active law enforcement credentials, almost all do not and to allow the group enforcement capability without appropriate training would create problems. POST demands 22+ weeks of training before any enforcement is allowed.

The original iteration of this bill addressed erosion of land due to excessive vessel speed and wakes. There is no indication that vessel passage causes any land erosion in comparison to that caused seasonally by raft ice flow. If this truly is an issue it is in very limited areas where fairways are narrow and waves cannot dissipate easily. If there is actual evidence of erosion a better solution with far less legal concerns may be to consider a minimum steerage regulation for the confined area. Adding untrained enforcement personnel would create significant liability issues.

We urge you again to not support H.B. No. 51~~98~~ An Act Concerning No-Wake Zones. It is an unnecessary initiative addressing a minor issue with a potential to create more problems and liability for a municipality. There are easier cures if a problem is found.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these issues and please know that we are available to discuss them at any time.

Sincerely,

John S. Johnson
Legislative Chair

Grant W. Westerson
President

Linda A. Kowalski
The Kowalski Group